

## MINORITY VETERANS PROGRAM COORDINATOR

- 1. REASON FOR ISSUE:** This Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) handbook establishes procedures for the implementation of Minority Veterans Program Coordinators (MVPCs) within each VA medical center, regional office, and national cemetery.
- 2. SUMMARY OF CONTENT:** This handbook sets forth the procedures, duties, and responsibilities of the Administrations, facility Directors, and the Director of the Center for Minority Veterans (CMV) as they relate to VA's Minority Veterans Program.
- 3. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** The Director of the Center for Minority Veterans (OOM) is responsible for the contents of this handbook.
- 4. RELATED DIRECTIVE:** VA Directive 0801, Minority Veterans Program Coordinator.
- 5. RESCISSIONS:** None

/s/  
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Secretary

Certified by:

/s/  
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Distribution: Electronic



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## MINORITY VETERANS PROGRAM COORDINATOR

### 1. PURPOSE

a. This handbook describes the procedures, duties, and responsibilities of individuals appointed as Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Central Office (VACO) Minority Veterans Program Coordinators (MVPCs) and Facility Minority Veterans Program Coordinators (FMVPCs). It also describes the duties and responsibilities relating to VA's Minority Veterans Program for the Administrations, facility Directors, and the Director of the Center for Minority Veterans (CMV).

b. This handbook is the primary resource for VACO MVPCs and for FMVPCs and is designed to increase program effectiveness and efficiency. It will assist these individuals in becoming a valuable resource within their facilities and communities and to the minority veterans they serve.

### 2. GENERAL

a. Public Law 102-218, Department of Veterans Affairs Chief Minority Affairs Officer Act, was enacted in December 1991 to ensure that VA benefits and services are provided to all minority veterans with dignity and respect, regardless of race. This legislation also created the position of Chief Minority Affairs Officer (CMAO) within VA.

b. Public Law 103-446, Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 1994, was enacted in November 1994 establishing the CMV to recognize and respond to segments of the minority veteran population who, for one reason or another, have special needs, are underserved, or alienated from mainstream society.

c. VA is committed to ensuring that all minority veterans and their families receive services from all programs, benefits and health care of the Department. The term "veterans who are minorities" means veterans who are identified as Asian American, Pacific Islander, African American, Hispanic, and Native American including American Indian, Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian.

d. The Director of the CMV is appointed by the Secretary to a 6-year term. The Director of the CMV advises the Secretary on the adoption and implementation of policies and programs affecting veterans who are minorities. CMV promotes the use of VA benefits, programs, and services by minorities, conducts outreach activities to minorities, provides support to the Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans, and performs such other duties consistent with the law and as the Secretary prescribes.

e. In 1995, VA established field-based Minority Affairs Officers (MAO) to strengthen, support, and enhance VA's minority outreach and to assist the Administrations in providing outreach. MAOs also served as ombudspersons for minority veteran communities. The Veterans Health Administration (VHA), Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), and National Cemetery Administration (NCA) appointed MAOs in all of their facilities. This position is currently referred to as the FMVPC.

f. FMVPCs' duties may be collateral (less than or equal to twenty-five percent) or assigned as a half-time or full-time position. The appointment is made by the facility Director. The designated FMVPCs are responsible for ensuring that VA's commitments to minority veterans are fully addressed. The FMVPCs are tasked with assisting the Department in increasing organizational sensitivity to minority veterans. This is done through education and awareness of available VA services and benefits for eligible minority veterans.

### 3. SCOPE

a. The number of VACO MVPCs will be determined by each Administration. Designation of appointments of MVPC as collateral, half time, or full time will be determined by the Administration. Typically a collateral duty assignment is less than or equal to twenty-five percent. Each VACO MVPC shall be responsible for the following:

(1) Coordinating and managing the Minority Veterans Program (MVP) in his/her Administration.

(2) Working directly with their FMVPCs and the CMV on initiatives having regional or national scope and impact.

(3) Analyzing, evaluating, advising, and implementing programs to improve the entire MVP.

b. Designation of appointments of FMVPC as collateral, half time, or full time will be determined by the facility Director. Typically a collateral duty assignment is less than or equal to twenty-five percent. In addition, each facility must have a designated FMVPC to serve as liaison and advocate on the behalf of minority veterans with veteran service organizations; Federal, State and local agencies; and other local community stakeholders and service providers to identify the unique needs of minority veterans. Each FMVPC in his/her respective facility shall do the following:

(1) **VHA.** Work with other VA staff to identify gaps in service delivery and ensure minority veterans are afforded equal access to all VA health care and benefits.

(2) **VBA.** Work with other VA staff to identify gaps in benefits delivery and ensure minority veterans are afforded equal access to and knowledge of all VA benefits (disability benefits, education and training, vocational rehabilitation & employment, insurance, survivors benefits, and home loans).

(3) **NCA.** Work with other VA staff to identify gaps in benefits delivery and ensure minority veterans are afforded equal access to and knowledge of all VA burial/memorial benefits provided in honor of our Nation's deceased veterans.

### 4. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

a. The Director of the CMV shall:

(1) Serve as the Secretary's senior advisor for establishing MVPC program policies and procedures and for monitoring program implementation.

(2) Provide direction, oversight, assistance, and information to the Administrations, facility Directors, and VACO MVPCs to promote and support program activities.

(3) Advocate on behalf of the VACO MVPCs and FMVPCs for resources and other support, when required and justified, for effective and efficient program operation and management.

(4) Conduct training forums and perform other educational and instructional activities that assist the VACO MVPCs and FMVPCs in promoting use of VA benefits by minority veterans.

b. Each Administration shall:

(1) Implement MVP policies and procedures and provide the necessary resources for national initiatives.

(2) Monitor and assess the successful implementation of the program.

c. Facility Directors shall:

(1) Support the FMVPCs and ensure they are provided the necessary resources to effectively perform the functions inherent in this position (e.g., allow sufficient time to perform the duties, provide computer access/e-mail, and fund projects and/or special programs, as required).

(2) Meet with the FMVPCs periodically (at a minimum, twice a year) to discuss initiatives and issues of interest and concern.

(3) List the FMVPCs name, location, and telephone number in the facility directory and/or publicly display them.

(4) Ensure representation of minority groups, by supporting the FMVPCs in conducting town hall/stakeholders/veteran service organizations/veterans meetings (a minimum of twice a year) to discuss issues and concerns.

(5) Support the FMVPCs, to the extent possible within available resources, by providing resources for training and education (e.g., MVPC conference, cultural competency training, VHA Equal Employment Opportunity Special Emphasis Conference).

## **5. DUTIES OF VACO MINORITY VETERANS PROGRAM COORDINATORS**

a. The VACO MVPC (collateral duty, half time, or full time) shall perform the following duties:

(1) Serve as an expert analyst on program implementation and advise senior management officials on issues regarding minority veterans.

(2) Ensure that all FMVPCs are appropriately trained in the areas of basic outreach.

(3) Review and evaluate statistical and narrative information to determine utilization rates of benefits and services by minority veterans.

(4) Serve as the principal liaison between the CMV and FMVPCs.

(5) Participate in monthly calls with the CMV.

(6) Communicate frequently with and provide guidance and support to FMVPCs.

(7) Facilitate collaboration by FMVPCs on outreach efforts in their geographic area.

b. Half-time or full-time VACO MVPCs are assigned these additional duties:

(1) Prepare periodic statistical and narrative reports for the Director of the CMV and other VACO staff.

(2) Support the top management team, attend meetings and/or presentations as appropriate, where changes in benefits and services are discussed that may impact minority veterans (e.g., staff reductions, streamlining, and budget reductions).

(3) Analyze trends and patterns and work with facility management officials to alter perceptions and/or to maximize benefits to minority veterans.

(4) Provide management officials with timely, comprehensive information that reflects the effectiveness of the MVP.

(5) Conduct meetings with FMVPCs within their jurisdiction as appropriate to disseminate program direction and information.

**c. Individuals appointed as VACO MVPCs must have the following skills and abilities:**

(1) Knowledge and comprehension of veterans benefit programs and current procedures and policies.

(2) Ability to be sensitive to the needs, concerns, and issues of minority veterans.

(3) Effective verbal, written, and interpersonal skills and the ability to communicate effectively with senior management.

(4) Strong analytical and problem-solving skills.

(5) Sound administrative skills and judgment and an ability to work independently and manage time effectively.

## **6. DUTIES OF FACILITY MINORITY VETERANS PROGRAM COORDINATORS**

a. The FMVPCs (collateral duty, half time, or full time) shall perform the following duties:



(1) Establish and maintain contact with minority organizations within the area(s) served by the facility to present information concerning benefits, to hear their concerns, and to answer questions.

(2) Work with the facility staff to formulate and communicate program objectives that raise the consciousness and awareness of the minority veteran program.

(3) Support and initiate activities that inform and sensitize facility staff to the unique needs of minority veterans.

(4) Distribute and use culturally sensitive materials to inform minority veterans and their families of the availability of VA services and benefits.

(5) Meet periodically with facility management and other internal stakeholders (i.e., Public Affairs, Equal Opportunity Committees, Patient Advocates) to inform and discuss trends or patterns, correct deficiencies, and address concerns/issues related to minority veterans.

(6) Advocate on behalf of minority veterans by making recommendations to improve service delivery within their facilities. Participate as appropriate on local advisory committees related to veterans to ensure that minority veterans' concerns are adequately addressed in decision-making processes.

(7) Inform VACO MVPC of all activities performed in the facility's catchment area.

b. Half-time and full-time FMVPCs are assigned these additional duties:

(1) Participate in monthly calls with the VACO MVPC.

(2) Conduct a minimum of three outreach sessions annually and meet with a minimum of three stakeholders to promote the use of VA programs and services.

(3) Develop a facility plan for outreach and stakeholder activities that targets minority veterans.

(4) Provide educational and outreach materials to targeted outreach groups.

(5) Act as a consultant and ombudsperson on issues pertaining to minority veterans.

(6) Review and evaluate statistical and narrative information to determine the utilization of the benefits and services by minority veterans.

(7) Conduct trend analyses of minority veterans' concerns or issues and recommend proactive initiatives and corrective actions to resolve recurrent problems to the facility Director.

(8) Prepare and submit an annual report to the VACO MVPC on issues identified through tracking and trend analyses.

(9) Keep abreast of VA policies, laws, and regulations and their impact on minority veterans.

c. Individuals appointed as FMVPCs must have the following skills and abilities:

(1) Knowledge and comprehension of veterans benefit programs, current procedures, and current policies.

(2) Ability to be sensitive to the needs, concerns, and issues of minority veterans.

(3) Effective verbal, written, and interpersonal skills.

(4) Strong analytical and problem-solving skills.

(5) Sound administrative skills and judgment and an ability to work independently and manage time effectively.

**7. REFERENCES**

a. Secretary Memorandum of April 25, 1995

b. Secretary Memorandum of March 12, 1999

c. 38 U.S.C., Part 1, Chapter 3, Section 317, Center for Minority Veterans